



Hi. I'm Rick Bowling, the National Commander of Civil Air Patrol. I'd like to use this opportunity to speak directly to every instructor pilot and check pilot in Civil Air Patrol. Our heritage of homeland security dates back to the inception of our organization and we are once again being asked by our country to help in its defense. To support the three Air Force Homeland Security Task Force mission areas – Prevent, Protect and Respond – we must first Prepare. This is where we need your help.

The nation and Civil Air Patrol needs our pilots "at the top of their game" and I'm counting on you to help make it happen. The various homeland security missions that we'll be asked to participate in will present challenges and accompanying risk. I want you to ensure that our pilots have the technical knowledge, proficiency and judgment to meet these challenges, but more importantly to keep our members safe.

Instructor pilots and check pilots are in the best position to guarantee the highest standards in our pilot force – it's not only your job; it's your responsibility! I also realize

that it's a tough job. It's extremely difficult to criticize your friend while instructing or administering a CAP flight evaluation. But, if everyone involved realizes that it's constructive criticism, aimed at increasing the safety and effectiveness of the pilot and ultimately our organization, we can't help but raise the level of our flight standards.

While most of our flight operations are usually completed professionally and without complication, we occasionally do have mishaps. An analysis of these mishaps reveals proficiency problems especially in ground operations and basic adherence to FAA Practical Test Standards. I'd like each one of you to place special emphasis on flight planning, checklist discipline, ground handling, obstruction clearance and precise aircraft control. If you see a need for more training, make it so. If you're giving a checkride and the examinee is not quite up to your standards, resist the urge to transition to a training situation. Document the deficiencies on the checkride and arrange to get the pilot some more training. After the instructor is convinced that the deficiencies have been eliminated, reschedule the flight evaluation. Again, I realize how uncomfortable this situation can be. But, I'm looking to you to make these tough calls and I'll support you as long as safety is part of your decision; the safety of the pilot and the overall safety of our flight operations.

Our pilots are some of the most dedicated, skilled professionals to serve our country. We need to stay vigilant and proactive in keeping our members in peak form. With your help, we'll confidently and safely meet every challenge in our emerging Homeland Security missions. Thanks for your help and your service to this great nation.